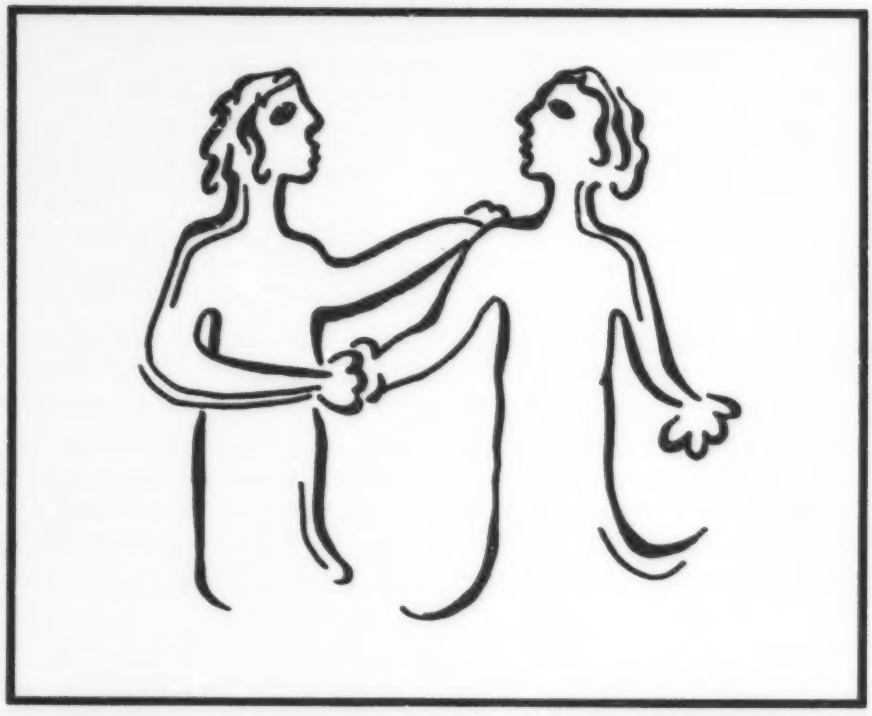
PLAN OF ACTION

IN RESPONSE TO "REACHING OUT", THE REPORT OF THE INDIAN AND METIS EDUCATION CONSULTATIONS



April, 1985

Saskatchewan Education
Hon. Patricia A. Smith
Minister

85-4262/

I have identified Indian and Metis education as a priority during my term as Minister of Education.

Therefore, in November of 1983, I asked Mr. Arnold Tusa, my Legislative Secretary and the MLA for Last Mountain-Touchwood, to begin consultations with those directly involved in Indian and Metis education.

Mr. Tusa's report, "Reaching Out," shows that steps can be taken to improve education for Indian and Metis students if we work together.

"Reaching Out" is a positive statement about the willingness of Saskatchewan people to overcome difficulties faced by many Indian and Metis students. Recommendations in the report offer practical solutions to many of the problems and provide direction for future developments.

By reaching out to each other at all levels of the school system, understanding of the needs of Indian and Metis students will grow. Greater understanding will, in turn, lead to improvements in Indian and Metis education.

What follows is the action plan which Saskatchewan Education and I will follow to further the recommendations made by Mr. Tusa. Although it does not represent a recommendation-by-recommendation response, the plan deals with each recommendation either directly or indirectly.

Recognizing that neither I nor my department can move forward alone, I call upon the educational community, parents and Indian and Metis organizations to help us. Each should identify how these recommendations will affect them and develop plans of action.

Mr. Tusa and others have reviewed Indian and Metis education extensively during the past three or four years. I do not plan further dialogue on Mr. Tusa's report. Rather, I intend to build the consultation necessary to achieve action into each of the initiatives in this plan of action.

The *Five Year Action Plan* adopted last year provides us with direction for curriculum development. This plan of action charts a course towards finalizing an Indian and Metis education policy for Saskatchewan.

Acceptance of the Tusa Principles

Mr. Tusa identified four principles to guide those who provide educational programs for Indian and Metis people. These principles are:

- Indian and Metis people must be given the opportunity to participate fully in the education system at all levels, from the school to Saskatchewan Education.
- The education system must recognize Indian and Metis students are the children of peoples whose cultures are, in many ways, very different from those of the people who established the school system. These differences, which may include learning styles, language and world-view, must be accounted for in curriculum, programs, teaching methods and climate in the schools attended by Indian and Metis children.
- There must be co-operation and consultation among all federal, provincial, local and Indian and Metis authorities to ensure co-ordination of efforts to meet the needs of Indian and Metis people.
- Efforts to improve the success of Indian and Metis students in school must begin at the school-community level.

Saskatchewan Education has adopted these principles and will use them to guide planning. My responses to Mr. Tusa's recommendations have been developed based on these principles.

Reaching Out

To support school divisions, parents and Indian and Metis organizations in reaching out, Saskatchewan Education and I will:

- Approach the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to propose production of a handbook and support activities to assist school staffs and officials in developing programs for reaching out to indian and Metis communities. These materials should be developed with and by Indian and Metis people.
- Approach the educational structures of the Association of Metis and Non Status Indians of Saskatchewan, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association to propose joint efforts in developing community education programs which encourage Indian and Metis parents to become involved in their community's schools.
- In conjunction with recent initiatives from "Directions," the final report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Curriculum and Instruction, programs to assist school divisions in enhancing school environment will be developed. Thus, improvement of Indian and Metis education can be linked with other new directions for education in Saskatchewan.
- Continue funding the Indian and Metis Education Development Program (IMED). Home and school liaison programs will remain a priority for funding under IMED.

Policy

- I have instructed my officials to begin developing an Indian and Metis education policy for Saskatchewan.

  Adoption of a policy will provide a foundation for action by all partners in education.

  This policy cannot be developed by Saskatchewan Education alone. My department will contact appropriate organizations to seek participation in this process.
- All those who wish to do so are asked to review Mr. Tusa's proposed policy on the last page of this plan of action and to forward their comments, suggestions and concerns directly to me.

Curriculum Development

- I repeat my support for the processes and goals established in *The Five Year Action Plan for Indian and Metis Curriculum Development*.
- I refer Mr. Tusa's more specific recommendations on curriculum and materials to the Indian and Metis Curriculum Advisory Committee for incorporation into its plan of action.

Human Resources Development Strategy

To help devise a comprehensive strategy for placing more Indian and Metis teachers in classrooms and for improving the effectiveness of all teachers in cross-cultural classrooms, Saskatchewan Education and I will:

- Continue development of the Indian and Metis Awareness Teacher Inservice program begun in 1984-85.
- Suggest the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation develop inservice programs of their own or in conjunction with those of the department and Indian and Metis educational organizations.
- Request the Deans of Education at both the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan to make cross-cultural education an integral part of courses offered in their respective teacher training programs.
- Continue support for the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and the Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP).
- Request SUNTEP, NORTEP and the Board of Teacher Education to assess the adequacy of these two teacher training programs in providing prospective teachers with the necessary, specialized training to secure employment.
- Request that the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission work with school divisions and Indian and Metis teacher training programs in developing co-operative approaches to employing greater numbers of Indian and Metis teachers.

Indian and Metis Participation

In the past, I have taken steps to increase the participation of Indian and Metis people in the decision-making processes of Saskatchewan Education. Examples include:

  - Continuing support for programs such as community schools and the Saskatoon Native Survival School. Both provide for significant parental involvement in education.
  - Establishing the Indian and Metis Curriculum Advisory Committee.
  - Including Indian and Metis people on major curriculum development committees, the Program Policy Committee and the Core Curriculum Advisory Committee.
  - Making a commitment to ensure Indian and Metis people are represented on other advisory committees.
- I encourage school divisions with significant enrolments of Indian and Metis students to involve Indian and Metis people in decision-making.
- I concur with Mr. Tusa's conclusion that reasonable opportunities exist for Indian people to be represented on boards of education and boards of trustees in rural centres. I encourage Indian

Bands to take advantage of these opportunities. Initiatives to assist schools and parents in reaching out to each other will help make these opportunities more successful.

- I am instructing my officials to begin discussions with urban school divisions to examine the possibility of restructuring funding for the Community Schools Program. Restructured program funding could expand the community schools concept to more than the sixteen schools now involved and afford greater opportunity for parental input.

Northern Issues

- I will establish a means to study the organization and delivery of educational services in the North.
- Saskatchewan Education will compile, evaluate, develop and publicize the availability of materials that serve the needs of Northern teachers and students, as well as ensure the North is represented in core curriculum.

Student Mobility and Attendance

- I recognize that not all factors contributing to student mobility and poor attendance are controlled by schools and school divisions. However, the onus should be on the educational system to develop strategies which consider student and family circumstances.
- I have directed my officials to approach the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association with a proposal for a project which would identify policies, programs and procedures for establishing dropout prevention programs. Indian and Metis educators and school divisions will also be asked to participate.

Federal-Provincial Relations

- I and my colleagues will continue to work towards harmonious relationships with Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada.
- I will provide the opportunity for Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada to have observer status on the Indian and Metis Curriculum Advisory Committee.

Positive Action

Mr. Tusa points out that in communities where "reaching out" has occurred, the results have been positive. I call on schools and Indian and Metis communities to take immediate action to develop closer ties between them.

There is no need to wait for more study or for others to take the lead. School staffs and parents can draw on suggestions presented in Mr. Tusa's report and on their own experience to take immediate, positive action.

Proposed Policy Statement For Indian and Metis Education

Saskatchewan Education recognizes that the Indian and Metis people of the province are historically unique peoples and occupy a unique place in our society today. Saskatchewan Education also recognizes that special programs and considerations are important to provide for the educational needs of Indian and Metis people.

Objectives:

1) To meet the short-term and long-term educational needs of Indian and Metis people.
2) To provide direction and leadership in the development and implementation of Indian and Metis education programs which meet the needs of urban, rural and Northern Indian and Metis people.
3) To establish processes by which Indian and Metis people can become directly involved in the decision-making which determines educational programs in the province.
4) To ensure that all curricula and materials present Indian and Metis people accurately in historical and modern terms and that Native-oriented materials and concepts are a part of all subject areas.

Definition:

The policy and programs set out in this statement refer only to Indian and Metis children who are enroled in schools under the jurisdiction of the Province of Saskatchewan. It is not to be implied that the Government of Saskatchewan is in any way assuming the legal and historical obligations that the Government of Canada has to aboriginal peoples.

Administrative Procedures:

1) Saskatchewan Education will, with advice and direction from the Indian and Metis Curriculum Advisory Committee, develop core and special curricula in Indian and Metis education. *The Five Year Action Plan for Native Curriculum Development* (March, 1984) will provide the framework for the development and implementation of these curricula.
2) Saskatchewan Education will work with the boards of education, teacher training institutions and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to assist Indian and Metis people in becoming professional educators at all levels and to develop a human resources strategy which will allow for special consideration to be given to Indian and Metis professionals in areas and schools with significant Indian and Metis populations.
3) Saskatchewan Education will work with the boards of education and Indian and Metis organizations to provide the means for Indian and Metis people to influence the education system at all levels.